Russian History and French Literature. Dostoevsky's Predecessors and Followers. How and Why to Teach *Crime And Punishment*. *From the Editor*

Esteemed Colleagues, Dear Readers,

In this issue we would like to congratulate two wonderful and beloved members of our Editorial Board: Olga A. Bogdanova, an undoubted coryphaeus of the theme "Dostoevsky and the Turn of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," and a thoughtful and attentive researcher of the broadest profile, and Natalia A. Tarasova, an amazing researcher, a leading and incomparable textual critic of Dostoevsky, and a key collaborator of the second Complete Works of Dostoevsky published by IRLI RAS.

We are also pleased to congratulate our first Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Nikolay N. Podosokorsky, on his fortieth birthday. In his remarkable, insightful, and consistently striking coverage of material, he explores History as an important, shaping layer of Dostoevsky's works and an element that determines his thinking abilities, for which the writer has been called a prophet, although it is obvious (and Podosokorsky's work makes this increasingly clear) that Dostoevsky was, above all, a deep analyst whose extensive historical knowledge allowed him to consistently make long-term predictions that proved to be accurate.

Nikolay Podosokorsky's opening articles (in the section *Hermeneutics. Slow Reading*) largely reshape our understanding and are devoted to two Russian "Histories," by Nikolay M. Karamzin and Sergey M. Solovyov, directly mentioned in Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*. Without understanding the references to these works, Dostoevsky's novel remains largely inaccessible to the reader.

The article devoted to Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*, the very first book mentioned in the novel, emphasizes that Karamzin's work proved to be the basis for the perception of Russian history and Russian state by Karamzin's contemporaries and their immediate descendants. It quickly moved into the realm of teenage reading, thus becoming not only one of the historical books read during one's life, but the ***first*** history of the homeland, repeatedly reread, known ***almost by heart*** by educated people such as the readers of *The Idiot*: and this, of course, presents the reference to the presence in it of the family of Prince Myshkin in

a very different way, which turns out to be much more extensive and complex than only the mention of one particular Myshkin in one particular chronicle[1]. The explanation given by Podosokorsky in his note to Dostoevsky's preference for Karamzin's *History* is very important, in my opinion: "It must be assumed that this priority attitude of the writer to Karamzin's *History* was due not only to his bright impressions from childhood, but also to the fact that Karamzin, unlike the vast majority of later historians, defended the sacred character of history and did not deduce God as an acting Subject from it." Also very important are the themes of the function of history for the resurrection and Karamzin's revival in the celebration of his centenary (the jubilee in 1866 may be Dostoevsky's last great impression before leaving Russia for long): themes that are very close to the main theme of the novel *The Idiot* and the note "Masha lies on the table..." which express the foundation of his worldview.

In a relatively short article on Solovyov's *History*, Nikolay Podosokorsky makes two significant discoveries at once: first, he explains why Rogozhin is not reading the multi-volume history of Solovyov that comes to mind to both readers and commentators; second, he shows on which page Rogozhin's knife was laid and why.

The Centre's annual round of conferences will conclude on October 1–3, 2024 with the International Online Conference "A Book in the Book," first held in 2023. The main organizer of the conference is Nikolay Podosokorsky[2]. The conference is dedicated to the theoretical problem of the presence of books as ***explicitly mentioned texts*** and ***material objects involved in the story*** in works of world literature and culture. We ask those who wish to participate in the conference to pay attention to the words in bold italics. At this conference we are not engaged in comparative studies; we are interested in the books that the author introduces into his text, assigning them a certain role and function to help the readers understand the author's intent. Clearly, at least in the case of a *reader* like Dostoevsky, the role of the book in his authorial intent will stem from a deep understanding of the authorial intentions of the other person's work introduced into his text. This means that one can begin to talk about the role of "a book in the book" only after a deep analysis of the book the author introduced into his text.

I would like to remind you that for the annual International Readings "Dostoevsky's Works in the Perception of 21st-Century Readers," as it is an ***educational conference***, you can apply to participate as a listener and join the

[1] As will be mentioned in my article in this issue, Karamzin also mentions the Abbot Paphnutius, who is so important for the prince, in a way that rhymes with the mention of Myshkin.

[2] See his reviews of the 2023 conference: [Podosokorsky, 2024], [Podosokorsky, 2024a].

discussion. We include such participants in the program and greatly appreciate their contribution to the research work during the conference. The 2025 Readings will be dedicated to the *White Nights*: this text is required reading for all participants, as this will ensure the possibility to participate in discussions and round tables. Reports on other works by Fyodor Dostoevsky are accepted as well.

The years 2021–2024 have witnessed the release of a significant number of publications dedicated to Dostoevsky and his works. However, they are still far from being fully assimilated by the academic community and are relatively underrepresented in academic contexts. We would be delighted to offer our pages for the publication of comprehensive and substantive reviews, including critical and polemical ones, of books and miscellanies released during this period. Furthermore, we are always open to publishing in-depth overviews of past conferences.

In the section *Hermeneutics. Slow Reading* the third, fascinatingly interesting article, by Tatiana Magaril-Il'iaeva, is devoted to General Ivolgin's reference in *The Idiot* to Dumas's *The Three Musketeers* to characterize the friendly alliance that binds him to General Epanchin and Prince Myshkin's father. Paying attention to the ***exact*** words with which General Ivolgin characterizes their hypothetical union, the researcher discovered that they are exact quotations from Dumas's novel, and that the presence of the French author and his novel in *The Idiot* is substantially broader, more intense and ideologically significant than the reference visible on the surface.

I would also suggest that the presence of Dumas father and Dumas son in the first part is also significant and has to do with the appearance of Myshkin son and Myshkin father in this part and the confusion with their names that occurs in General Ivolgin's speeches. Having paid attention to the very meaning of the words from Dumas's novel ('three ***inseparable'***, 'cavalcade' — one of the images of ***multiplicity in unity***), with which Ivolgin describes three friends, we can notice that one of them is Myshkin's father, another (Epanchin) addresses him 'fatherly' at the first meeting, and the third (Ivolgin himself) could be his father, since he was competing with the Prince for his mother. This way we will see the image of Prince Myshkin's ***trinity father*** formed from Ivolgin's tales and through the 'accidental' words of the characters. It then becomes quite clear why Ivolgin, at the moment of comparison, confuses the name of Myshkin father, calling him by the name of Myshkin son.

My article, the fourth of the section, is devoted to the presence of Pushkin's *Collected works*, published by Annenkov, in the novel *The Idiot*. I emphasize that in order to understand a work of fiction in which ***everything*** is significant (i.e., especially Dostoevsky's work) the reader (notably, a researcher) ***has to*** be familiar

with the books mentioned in the text. If some book is left out of our attention, we must realize that a certain layer of the text has remained inaccessible to us. This is not absolutely disastrous for the understanding of the text, because Dostoevsky, who defined artistry as the ability to convey the author's thought to the reader completely and fully, at least duplicates (or even triplicates) the sources of the reader's associations he needs, taking them from different cultural traditions, striving for the thought to "reach" the reader through at least one of the channels, and as a thought "felt" by him (as one of the characters in *The Devils* will say). Still, the ***scholarly*** study of his works should involve first and foremost the study of the books named by the author directly in the text, rather than comparing two works solely on the basis that they came together in the researcher's mind, often for reasons completely extraneous to the text researched. Pushkin's edition named in *The Idiot* literally permeates the text of the novel and explains things in it in which Pushkin's presence cannot be suspected if we are working with other editions. Not to mention the fact that it explains the appearance of Pavlishchev's surname in the novel, the strange story of the reproduction of Igumen Paphnutii's "own handwriting," as well as the potency of the poem about the Poor knight to convey to the reader the stanzas it omits.

In the section *Poetics. Context* the first article, important for understanding the novel, accurate in its conclusions and informative, is by Alexander Krinitsyn and is devoted to references to Plato's dialogue *The Republic* in *Crime and Punishment*. The author begins his research with an overview of the abundant presence of Russian translations of Plato and studies devoted to him in Russia in the last third of the eighteenth to the sixties of the nineteenth century, which is very important for creating a correct picture of the Russian cultural environment of that time for both readers and researchers of Dostoevsky. I would also consider it necessary to emphasize more emphatically the obvious, but regularly overlooked, fact that Russian educated readers had equal access to books in French (at least), which greatly expanded their opportunities to get acquainted with the fundamental philosophical works of mankind. I would consider Krinitsyn's attempt to explain the inevitability of Dostoevsky's acquaintance with Plato by indirect reasons, such as his rapprochement with the Slavophiles and his desire to understand the roots of Eastern Christianity, to be superfluous: given Dostoevsky's passionate love of philosophy, he could in no way ignore the very source of European philosophy and, moreover, the philosopher most akin to him both intellectually and in the way of expression.

The presence of the beginning of the dialogue *The Republic* in the foundation of Raskolnikov's theory, a presence directly denouncing this theory, is shown by the author very convincingly. The connection between lawlessness and

the dominance of reason in both Plato and Dostoevsky is also remarkably well noted. The impossibility of a single definition for the concept of "justice" used by different characters in Dostoevsky's novel, demonstrated at the end of the article, is, in my opinion, a challenge that should provoke a holistic study of this concept in the novel.

The second article in the section is by Jasmina Vojvodić. In it the author tries to show the semantic aspect of the clothing of the characters in *Crime and Punishment*, to review its interpretative potentialities, its ability to both reveal and conceal things, life events and personal qualities of its wearers, and to conceal and reveal both according to their will and against it. The author interestingly links Raskolnikov's inability to change his clothes with his inability to change his life himself: for both he needs Razumikhin's help. The author shows with surprising accuracy how the clothes of the amorous Razumikhin "change *from within*," while the clothes of the fiancé-Luzhin are revealed as those of a mimicry predator. What is important is the marked maturation (and at the same time rebirth) of Sonia from the beginning of the novel to the epilogue, shown through suffixes in the names of ***the same clothes*** (*platochek*, *burnusik* became *platok*, *burnus*) that she wore at the very beginning, going out on her shameful feat of self-denial, and in which she found herself at the very end, in the realm of Abraham's time. The article is certainly valuable in that it draws the attention of future researchers to several important, but often overlooked elements of the novel.

I should also note that the article begins by mentioning the dialogue about fashion magazines that is conducted in Alyona Ivanovna's flat by the dyers at the moment when Raskolnikov appears there, having returned to look at the blood. Although the author immediately moves away from the theme of fashion in the novel, it is clear to me that by drawing attention to this episode she has marked another point of entry into the space of the novel that needs to be developed. I would note in this episode, first, the "inappropriate" use of the fashion magazine: if in the case of the men, it is precisely about clothing ("The male sex is more and more wearing *bekeshas*" [Dostoevsky, 1972–1990, vol. 6, p. 133]), while in the case of women the attention is obviously not on clothes: "and in the women's department there are such *soufflers*, brother, that you should give me everything, and not enough!" [Dostoevsky, 1972–1990, vol. 6, p. 133]. The commentaries inform us: "*Soufflers* is the prison name for 'women of easy behavior'. *Suflera* is a slutty woman, a prisoner's love" [Dostoevsky, 1972–1990, vol. 4, p. 318]. On the one hand, this meaning of the word fits well with the novel, in which the common property of men is to be drunk (whether from wine or not is another matter), and the common property of women is to be sexually used, bought (again, another

matter: for money, or for a more complicated reward; I suppose this is the reason for the seemingly superfluous scene where one prostitute condemns the other for taking money "for nothing," i.e., for treating Raskolnikov as a person, not as a male). The question arises, however, to what extent Dostoevsky could have intended the word to be known to his educated readers in this sense (even though he used it in this sense in *Notes from the Dead House*, where the prison context is clear), and also — what additional (or basic) associations it must have evoked in the readers. The passage raises a more general question: when Dostoevsky uses words from the "convict slang" in his novels, does he use it primarily in the sense in which it is known to a rather limited and rather specific segment of the population, or does he use them in order to activate those additional associations, phonetic and semantic, which may arise among readers of a very different social status? Does he use it precisely because they offer the possibility of such activation? In this case, the Russian word includes the rather obvious in meaning 'souffle' (woman as a dainty), and the minimum two-valued 'souffler' (from the French *souffler* — 1) to blow, meaning an alchemical tradition in which the word 'souffler' is associated with the search for the material instead of the spiritual, here — love of the bodily instead of love that saves; 2) to suggest (whisper), figurative of to blow: to whisper into an actor's ears what he will utter loudly and audibly, in a full voice: on the one hand, an obvious description of the effect of the spirit on a person, and also a constant statement-accusation on a woman's action toward her man ('she wishpered into his ears'), on the other hand, the tradition of theatre, more easily perceived by the reader, has recently, in the Romantic era, resumed in a language understandable for the time, the story of the love of the soul for the Creator, conducted through images of sexual love).

In the third article of the section, Valentina Borisova provides an interesting and highly heuristic analysis of the hero's mistake[3], marked through punctuation and variously indirectly conveyed (including through "plot criticism:" [Nazirov, 1982, p. 64]) by the author: Raskolnikov's assessment of the actions and intentions of one of the "founders and legislators of humanity," Muhammad, and in understanding what constitutes a "trembling creature." However, one cannot but notice that the analogy between Christianity and Islam, expressed graphically in the article, is constructed by the author of the article more (but not completely) from the point of view of Islam, because from the point of view of Christianity Christ cannot be called a prophet, as He is the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God and God (as Dostoevsky put it, "NB. Christ is God, as far as the earth

[3] This is one of Dostoevsky's stable techniques: a hero's mistake, not directly corrected by the author, but to be recognized by the reader as a mistake. See about it: [Kasatkina, 2015, pp. 304-320].

could reveal God." [Dostoevsky, 1972–1990, vol. 24, p. 244]). That is, in this case the researcher substitutes the value basis of the author of the novel with her own, which significantly undermines the reliability of the inputs she received.

The section *Dostoevsky: Translation Problems* publishes an article by Evgenia Litinskaya devoted to a comparative analysis of the translations of the scene of Raskolnikov's meeting with Marmeladov into Modern Greek. The main problem, as in almost all cases of translations of Dostoevsky into foreign languages, is that the translators do not recognize biblical and liturgical quotations and allusions in the characters' speech and do not reproduce these references to the Holy Scriptures as clearly in the target language, thus removing from Dostoevsky's work the basic semantic layer that often changes the readable superficial, narrative meanings into other, sometimes directly opposite, meanings.

The section *Dostoevsky in the 20th and 21st Centuries* publishes an article by Pavel Fokin describing the consistent change in the perception Fyodor Dostoevsky's personality and work by the 20th century social philosopher Alexander Zinoviev and comparing their philosophical and artistic systems. Alexander Zinoviev said nothing original or adequate about Dostoevsky; his statements say a lot about him (Pavel Fokin very accurately notes, though he describes it a little differently, that Zinoviev looks at Dostoevsky like a mirror, seeing only himself in him all the time) and almost nothing about Dostoevsky. However, his judgments (as well as his self-aggrandizement over Dostoevsky, arising, among other things, from the certainty that his being a little further on the historical scale means not only "further" but also "higher", giving him a broader view and, as a consequence, the privilege to evaluate and the right to judge) are highly characteristic of a certain type of social activists and atheist thinkers of the 20th and 21st centuries, and from this point of view are certainly worthy of consideration and research. Pavel Fokin wittily juxtaposes Dostoevsky's original postulate and Zinoviev's postulate, formulated by the author of the article himself by analogy: "man is a mystery" and "society is a mystery." Unfortunately, for all its brilliance, such a comparison is superficial and inaccurate: coming from a deep knowledge of man, it is natural and logical to comprehend what society is (and what, even the most conspicuous, of its features are in fact distortions); starting from society (and only from this level can an atheist begin his research, because for him outside of society man is not visible and tangible), it is impossible to understand what man is, and consequently, it is impossible to understand what society is, and it is possible to confuse its essence with its distortions. When research starts from this level, it is natural and logical to fall into pessimism and despair, which is what happened to Zinoviev, and which Dostoevsky vividly showed in his works by portraying his heroes of a certain ideological orientation. In this sense, it would

be more appropriate to compare Zinoviev with Dostoevsky's heroes rather than with their author.

Meanwhile, Fokin's own judgments about Dostoevsky's creative universe are often impeccably accurate and can form the basis of a good chapter on the writer in a textbook of any level (such a good chapter does not yet exist, unfortunately, in any textbook). For example, this: "In fact, with the general integrity of Dostoevsky's artistic world, each of his works is unique from an aesthetic point of view; each is an experiment and a challenge. Dostoevsky never repeats himself, although he is always focused on one thing." Fokin's method of comparative analysis of the artistic and ideological[4] systems of the two authors, although not convincing in their (both authors' and systems') similarity, becomes an effective method of identifying what is important in both systems.

In the section *Dostoevsky on Stage, in Cinema, and Media*, intended for works that explore the translation of Dostoevsky's texts into live or animated imagery, the first article by Lyudmila Saraskina is devoted to the animated video for Vyacheslav Butusov's song *The Idiot*. It is not by chance that the author of the article begins her analysis of the clip by talking about *Walking on Water* (text by Ilya Kormiltsev). *Walking on Water* is as far from the Gospel story as Butusov's *Idiot* is from the plot of Dostoevsky's. But *Walking on Water* is as much akin to the heart of the Gospel story as Butusov's song *The Idiot* is to the deeper meaning of Dostoevsky's novel. The music video, however, turns out to be much more complex, ambiguous and, in my opinion, less integral and close to the novel than the song. This is not surprising: it is no longer about the novel, but about our time, a time in which the heroes of the theatre that is "the whole world" are rebelling against the author, defeating the author, trying to kill the author (and the Author): at least for a while, at least in the minds of their contemporaries. But there are also those among them who save the author (and the Author?), by all means and at any cost.

The second article, by Olga Kochetkova, is a kind of transitional article between this and the next section; it is both a skillful study of Peter Dumala's translation of *Crime and Punishment* into the language of animation and a presentation of possible concrete ways of working with students to compare the verbal text and its figurative interpretation.

---

[4] It may seem that Fokin does find and convincingly demonstrates some commonality in the ideological systems of the heroes of his article: in fact, this commonality (Russian as the most "unconstrained" model of man, Europe as a non-ideal, etc.) is the commonality of certain reference points of thought shared, at least in the 19th century, by deep thinkers of both Russia and Europe, but not the commonality of either lines of thought, its conclusions, or even evaluations of these reference points themselves.

In the section *Teaching Dostoevsky* I publish a roundtable discussion on the problems and approaches to teaching *Crime and Punishment*, which was the outcome of the 3rd International Online Conference "*Crime and Punishment*: Current State of Study"[5] held by our Centre from 28 February to 29 March 2024. It gathered thoughtful and insightful researchers and teachers of Dostoevsky's work around the questions asked by teachers in preparation for the conference. We discussed where to start talking about the novel with the class and where independent research by pupils and students can begin, whether the phrase "Raskolnikov was tormented by his conscience" is a factual error, how to talk about Dostoevsky's biography, how to engage pupils in reading, and what young people gain from reading the novel, the importance of reading (and, of course, reading Dostoevsky) for life and not for "aesthetic development" or "raising educational level," the hero (Razumikhin) as a model, what it means to "break circumstances" and "adapt to circumstances," the price of transformation, and much more.

At the last moment before the magazine went to layout, on September 4, we received the news of the passing of Dmitry A. Dostoevsky, the great-grandson of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Dima, dear, we remember, love, and grieve — but we also find solace in the fact that your death was peaceful and dignified. May your journey be smooth, your rest be gentle, and your reunion with your great-grandfather, in whose name you lived, be filled with joy.

Nikolay Podosokorsky wrote about Dmitry Dostoevsky in the column *In Memoriam*.

The journal is on *Vkontakte* and *Telegram* (with already 10 600 followers). You can subscribe to our pages to follow news from both the Journal and Research Centre "Dostoevsky and World Culture." Among other things, all the recordings from seminars and conferences organized by the Centre are published here. Books and articles dedicated to Dostoevsky are also available for download.

Vkontakte: https://vk.com/dostmirkult

Telegram: https://t.me/dostmirkult

The journal is published in cooperation with the Commission for the Study of Fyodor Dostoevsky's Artistic Heritage at the Academic Council "History of World Culture" RAS. Our work is carried out in contact with the Russian and International Dostoevsky Society.

As before, all quotations from Fyodor Dostoevsky's works, if not specified otherwise, are cited according to the *Complete Works* in 30 vols. (Leningrad,

[5] For an analytical review of the conference, see: [Kasatkina, 2024].

Nauka Publ., 1972–1990), with the references formatted according to the rules of the Russian Science Citation Index. Capital letters in the names of God, the Virgin, as in other holy names and concepts, that were lowered in this edition because of Soviet censorship are here restored in accordance with the editions published during Dostoevsky's life. The author's original emphasis in quotations (where not specified otherwise) is indicated by italics; the emphasis of the author of the article is indicated by bold font.

Our email address is fedor@dostmirkult.ru. The journal accepts articles in Russian and English. We accept submissions related to the subject of the journal from Russia and abroad. The authors will be notified about acceptance or refusal within a month.

Tatiana Kasatkina

References

1. Dostoevskii, F.M. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii: v 30 tomakh* [*Complete Works: in 30 vols*]. Leningrad, Nauka Publ., 1972–1990. (In Russ.)

2. Kasatkina, T.A. *Sviashchennoe v povsednevnom. Dvusostavnyi obraz v proizvedeniiakh F.M. Dostoevskogo* [*The Sacred in the Ordinary: The Two-Folded Image in Dostoevsky's Works*]. Moscow, IWL RAS Publ., 2015. 528 p. (In Russ.)

3. Kasatkina, T.A. "Obzor III Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi onlain-konferentsii 'Prestuplenie i nakazanie': sovremennoe sostoianie izucheniia, 28, 29 fevralia – 1 marta 2024 goda" ["Summary of the 3rd International Online Conference '*Crime and Punishment*: Current State of Research,' February 28, 29 – March 1, 2024"]. *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura. Filologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 2 (26), 2024, pp. 255–304. (In Russ.) https://doi.org/10.22455/2619-0311-2024-2-255-304

4. Nazirov, R.G. *Tvorcheskie printsipy Dostoevskogo* [*Dostoevsky Creative Principles*]. Saratov, Izd-vo Sarat. un-ta Publ., 1982. 160 p. (In Russ.)

5. Podosokorskii, N.N. "Itogi i perspektivy mezhdunardnoi nauchnoi onlain-konferentsii 'Kniga v knige', posviashchennoi pamiati Aleksandra Viktorovicha Mikhailova (1938–1995), 2–4 oktiabria 2023 goda" ["Results and Prospects of the International Online Conference 'A Book in the Book,' in Memory of Alexander V. Mikhailov (1938–1995), October 2–4, 2023"]. *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura. Filologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 2 (26), 2024, pp. 305–313. (In Russ.) https://doi.org/10.22455/2619-0311-2024-2-305-313

6. Podosokorskii, N.N. "Obzor mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi onlain-konferentsii 'Kniga v knige', 2–4 oktiabria 2023 goda" ["Summary of the International Online Conference 'The Book in the Book', 2–4 October 2023"]. *Tekst. Kniga. Knigoizdanie*, no. 34, 2024, pp. 149–158. (In Russ.)